

DATE: February 9, 1973

To : File

FROM : Joshua Lederberg

SUBJECT: Avery; Conversation with Rollin Hotchkiss and Norton Zinder, February 6, 1973 at Rockefeller University

Rollin recalls that Harriett visited Rockefeller probably in July 1945 in order to interview Avery. He knows she also saw Dubos at that time and has the impression that Dubos organized the entire arrangement. He had the idea that Avery should be looking for geneticists and he knew Harriett conceivably via Bernie Davis. Rollin himself joined the group the following year. The date is not tied down absolutely. I have asked Rollin if he could find some record of it. Since Harriett had pointed out Avery's paper to me in January 1945 this would be consistent with the statement that she made this approach "after reading his publication". However we have other evidence that the work in Avery's lab was discussed in some detail at Columbia during the years preceeding. For example, Dave Perkins recalls that Harriett gave a seminar on the Griffith work before he left for the army which would have been fall 1942. In addition, Dunn mentions that Dawson had given a seminar presumably also during that general period.

While there were undoubtedly other channels of communication between Rockefeller and Columbia -- especially Mirsky and Pollister, Rollin finds it hard to believe that Dobzhansky could have had a very meaningful direct conversation with Avery and doubts that this would ever have taken place. Avery's manner was such that it would be very difficult to get through except for someone who knew him intimately for a very long time.

Dobzhansky quotes the monograph on the biology of pneumococcus, 1938, by White et al. for the background information on the pneumococcus transformation in his 1941 edition. He refers to Griffith, Dawson, Heidelberger, Avery, and many other... This suggests that Dawson or Heidelberger might have been the immediate inspirations to Dobzhansky in pointing out this work.

cc: Dr. Rollin Hotchkiss

? date seminar

Rollins:

Hamitt came to  
Ece Dubos,  
inter. Avery.

probably met Avery then  
"his initiative"  
Dubos arranged it.  
(and persuaded her)

came to lab

July 45<sup>th</sup>

Rollins H joined  
group July 46

discussed yeast  
with RH.

R.D involved in TB.

Dunn or Dohy.

other channels  
??

Dubos:3

"Avery is looking  
for somebody"

can't remember that  
Dunn or Dohy  
got through.

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1973